

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 /049 R

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APPROVED BY ARA/MEX:D.E.SIMCOX
-----022226 221944Z /45

P 221924Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 103689

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, MX

SUBJECT: MEXICO AND F-5S

FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT APRIL 20 NOON PRESS
BRIEFING:

1. Q: TOM, HAVE YOU GOT ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORT THAT
MEXICO HAS WITHDRAWN ITS REQUEST TO BUY F-5S?

A: YES. AS YOU MAY REMEMBER LAST YEAR, THE MEXICANS
REQUESTED INFORMATION AS TO PRICE AND AVAILABILITY OF
F-5 AIRCRAFT. WE PROVIDED THAT INFORMATION. WE NOW
UNDERSTAND THAT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IS NO LONGER
INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE QUESTION.

2. Q: WHY?

A: I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO THE MODALITIES OF HOW WE
WERE INFORMED BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT.

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3. Q: TOM, AT THE SAME TIME WE WERE TOLD THAT THE
GUATEMALANS ALSO WANTED TO BUY SOME F-5 AIRCRAFT. WHAT
HAPPENED TO THAT?

A: I'LL TAKE THAT QUESTION.

4. Q: ARE WE HAPPY OR SAD THAT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO

BUY THESE F-5S OR DO WE HAVE ANY ATTITUDE ABOUT IT WHAT-
EVER?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANY ATTITUDE TO EXPRESS. IT CAME FROM
MEXICO'S INITIATIVE ORIGINALLY, AND I JUST HAVE NO
COMMENT.

5. Q: TOM, HAS THE INITIATIVE BEEN DROPPED ENTIRELY
OR HAVE THEY SELECTED A DIFFERENT KIND OF AIRCRAFT OR
EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN ANY SUBSTITUTE?

A: NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY --.

6. Q: AS FAR AS YOU'RE AWARE, THE INITIATIVE HAS
BEEN DROPPED ENTIRELY.

A: THAT'S MY UNDERSTANDING.

7. Q: THEY DON'T WANT F-15S, DO THEY, TOM?

A: I DON'T THINK THERE'S BEEN A REQUEST LIKE THAT, NO.

8. Q: AT THE TIME IT WAS ANNOUNCED HERE, I HAD THE
IMPRESSION THAT THEY HAD SAID THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO
BUY THEM. NOW YOU SEEM TO BE SAYING THAT THEY ONLY ASK
HOW MUCH THEY COST, IS THAT IT?
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A: WE.. IT SAYS HERE, INFORMATION AS TO PRICE AND
AVAILABILITY OF F-5S.

9. Q: DOES THAT MEAN THAT THEY WANTED TO BUY THEM OR
THEY JUST WANTED TO KNOW HOW MUCH THEY WOULD HAVE TO
PAY FOR THEM?

A: WELL, I THINK THAT THERE WAS SOME INTEREST ON THE
PART OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN ULTIMATELY PURCHASING
SOME OF THE AIRCRAFT. BUT NOW, AND AS AN INITIAL
STAGE, I WOULD ASSUME THEY WOULD ASK HOW MUCH THEY COST
AND WHETHER THEY COULD IN FACT PHYSICALLY BE MADE
AVAILABLE.

10. Q: WAS THAT INFORMATION GIVEN TO THEM?

A: YES, IT WAS GIVEN TO THEM. NOW THEY'RE JUST NO
LONGER INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE REQUEST.

11. Q: DO YOU KNOW IF WE TOLD THEM THAT IF THEY WOULD LIKE
THEY COULD BUY THEM? COULD THEY GET A SALE APPROVAL FROM

THE STATE DEPARTMENT IF THEY HAD SAID THAT THEY'D BUY THEM?

A: I DON'T KNOW WHAT STAGE IT GOT TO, JUAN. THEY HAVE WITHDRAWN THE REQUEST. THE MATTER HAS MOVED AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED.

12. Q: WAS THE AVAILABILITY FOR MEXICO THE SAME AS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR SOME OTHER COUNTRY ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD?

A: I DON'T HAVE A JUDGMENT TO RENDER ON THAT.

13. Q: WE ARE NOT MAKING IT HARDER FOR THEM TO BUY UNCLASSIFIED

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F-5S AS WE'VE MADE IT FOR INDONESIA, SAY, EARLIER THIS YEAR?

A: IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT WE HAVE NEVER HAD A FORMAL REQUEST FROM THEM TO BUY THE THINGS.

14. Q: WHEN THEY ASK FOR THE AVAILABILITY AND THE PRICE, AND WE SAY IT'S GOING TO COST US A MILLION DOLLARS EACH IN 1998, THAT MIGHT DISCOURAGE THEM.

A: I REALLY COULDN'T SPEAK TO WHAT DISCOURAGES THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT OR ENCOURAGES IT. I JUST DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO OFFER YOU, LARS.

15. Q: WOULD YOU DENY THAT YOU MADE AN ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE THEM FROM THIS PURCHASE?

A: I'M JUST NOT WELL ENOUGH INFORMED ABOUT THE MATTER TO CONFIRM OR DENY THAT.

16. Q: WHAT WAS THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION? DO YOU KNOW THAT?

A: I CAN'T GO INTO THAT.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, PRESS CONFERENCES, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE103689
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: P.E.STORING:MRG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780172-1056
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780427/aaaaawkd.tel
Line Count: 162
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0e0954a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2877859
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEXICO AND F-5S FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT APRIL 20 NOON PRESS BRIEFING
TAGS: MASS, SOPN, MX, US
To: MEXICO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0e0954a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014